

City Council Regular Meeting Transcript – 7/27/2022

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[10:06:54 AM]

>> Vela: Councilmember >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Kelly, do you want to make a -- >> Kelly: Thank you so much. I just want to wish my daughter a happy 13th birthday. I am now the mother of a teenager and she is graciously spending her birthday with us as we go through this budget hearing.

[10:07:56 AM]

Happy birthday, Rebecca, I'm proud to be your mama. >> Mayor Adler: Happy birthday, and boy does your mom know how to show you a good time. [Laughter] Colleagues, fortunately for -- Rebecca, this is not going to last all day today. Looks like we have about 31 speakers so we're going to go three minutes a speaker. We're going to start with speakers speaking remotely, and then we'll call the speakers that are here in person. This is the Austin city council. This is a regularly scheduled meeting for the purpose of taking public comment on the budget. Today is jul27th, 2022. The time is 10:08. And we will commence with that public testimony. Today is nothe day for us to deliberate, nor is it a day for us to vote on

[10:08:59 AM]

anything, but to really take in the comment from the community. Unless anybody has anything, we'll start right away. Yes, mayor pro tem. >> Alter: I just want to clarify for next week when we have this hearing we are going to add the opportunity to have discussion. >> Mayor Adler: To do what? >> Alter: Next week's hear we'll have the opportunity to have discussion. >> Mayor Adler: As we discussed yesterday we were going to notice that on the meetings. Deborah tell us it's already happened. Alter: Wonderful. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: All right. Clerk, if you want to go ahead and start calling the

remote speakers. >> Clerk: First speaker Marshall Zuniga. >> Yes, hi, thank you all for you all's time. My name is Marshall. I'm a kindergarten teacher born and raised in Austin.

[10:10:01 AM]

I would like to implore that the city council definitely amend the budget coming up. I think you should definitely give the 75 million that does 30 coalitions to help our community instead of giving 178 million to increase the police budget. You know, after uvalde, as a organizer, you can't help but put yourself into those shoes. I hope the teachers and the kids and the parents and, like, if you are coming for me and my kids, you are trying to hurt them, you have to go through me. And it's just astonishing seeing all those pictures and videos of cops just standing around texting, getting hand sanitizer. I just think that police just make our community less safe and just ruin people's lives. And I think that the proposition from the 30

[10:11:02 AM]

organizations with the request of \$75 million to invest in our community will not only improve the lives of, what, the million-plus people here now, but also make everybody safer. It will prevent more, like, shootings like uvalde. It will just completely revolutionize the city. And so I just -- I just really ask that you all vote with empathy and humanity and morality and not with fear of the cops or the cop unions or, you know, somebody has to stand up to the bad boys and I think that you all have a perfect opportunity to really do some good in this community. Thank you for your time. I'm done speaking. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: Rachel Shannon.

[10:12:06 AM]

>> Good morning, mayor Adler and members of the council. My name is Rachel Shannon and I've been a resident of district 1 for 21 years. I speak today in solidarity with the coalition who built the community investment budget. I was thankful to see some of the pieces of the community budget investment budget and the work being realized. This budget sits at the heart of the collective process and our city's commitment to racial equity and justice shows up in this document. And austinites really deserve a fully-funded commitment to that goal. Our commitment is reflected in the lowest paid city staff including contract and part-time and seasonal workers who deserve living wages who allow them to live decently in the city they serve. The investments for use and families and park and park maintenance, it's reflected in the support of understaffed and underpaid paramedics providing care to

[10:13:07 AM]

all austinities. It's reflected in the Biden administration -- breadth during one of the most challenging intersections of growth and economic hardship our city has seen. I really believe that 6% of the general fund is a reasonable commitment to invest in a robust future for all of our community and I implore you to act courageously in support of that future. Thank you so much for your time. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: Lauren Orto. >> Hi, my name is law Renteria Orto and I live in district 1. I'm speaking in solidarity with the coalition of local grass roots organizers who built the community investment budget in support of the numerous austinities struggling to survive in our changing city. It's been heart break to go see how much suffering people are experiencing, but I believe we can change

[10:14:07 AM]

that. I'm excited to see some pieces of the community investment budget funded, but we know that the full package is what we need to make Austin a more equitable city for everyone who lives here. Community health, safety and well-being rely on fully funding these strategic investments in the fin budget. Please revisit the thoughtful pieces of this proposal and amend the budget of proposed to include all \$74 million. We're read to see you make this important investment in our city. Thank you for your time. >> Clerk: Sara hay. >> Good morning. My name is Sara hay. I am a resident of district 9 and a volunteer with the Austin justice coalition. I'm speaking today to provide comments on the proposed city budget. I am in support of the community investment budget which would have the city spend \$74.8 million of the general fund on items the community has been calling for for years. The covid-19 pandemic

[10:15:08 AM]

continues to hurt our most vulnerable neighbors, tenants and their families need rent assistance, but two freezes and the current heat wave is just the beginning of an ongoing cycle of weather disasters the city will continue to have. We need inclement weather shelters in place. Ems and city workers deserve a wage increase. Folks on the ground who do harm reduction need support for those suffering from the nationwide opioid crisis. Our parks and libraries need support. This budget could fund a trauma recovery center. This money could give support for -- it's how the city tells us what's important to them and our children and themselves and vulnerable communities deserve to be supported. It should -- it should be reflected in the things we fund through this budget. No more scraps. Thank you. >> Clerk: Phil Howery.

[10:16:13 AM]

>> Yes, I appreciate the time. If we're talking the comments I've heard about fairness and equity, no one is talking about the property tax pairs that pay the taxes for this budget. And what I was owned wondering if the city council wants to be fair and equitable, why don't they take the knowledge about ethnicity, submit it to an independent third party audit. That's on standard operating procedure for any legitimate business. Whether it's a tax-exempt entity or not. And the fact of the matter is that the property owners and taxpayers in this city are being totally robbed by the city through rate structure. Why doesn't Austin energy submit its rate structures to the Texas public utility commission and let them review that against allowable and unallowable expenses. The city of Austin has power

[10:17:14 AM]

plants. The energy that's produced by those power plants goes to ERCOT, goes into the grid. People that use that electricity in the state of Texas that's part of that grid, they have the benefit of having Texas public utility commission review their rates of the companies that charge their electricity rates. Why doesn't the city of Austin, why don't taxpayers in the city of Austin have that benefit? One more thing, I was on the commission, the Austin resource recovery commission and that budget when I was on that commission was \$95 million servicing just under 200,000 households. By comparison, the city of Houston, the solid waste recovery department in the city of Houston, their trash service has a budget of \$84 million servicing 423,000 households.

[10:18:15 AM]

It's clearly that this budget, the city of Austin's budget, needs to -- needs a third-party independent audit. I don't understand why the city council or anyone in the city would be against that if you are really concerned about fairness and equity. I just -- I don't -- [inaudible] When you are totally abusing the taxpayers in the city of Austin. On top of that, Austin energy, Austin water and wastewater contribute \$200 million a year to the general fund, which is nothing but a tax that's being taxed from the ratepayers. And I just don't see the fairness of that. So -- and I would just plead with the city and city council to have some sort of empathy for the property tax payers in Austin. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: Preston Manis.

[10:19:18 AM]

>> Hello. Thank you for your time. My name is Preston Manis. I am a citizen and property tax payer in district 6. I'm calling to support Austin equity's community investment sludge bet to the full \$74 million or so and I am also requesting to deprioritize funding the bullies. I understand that the state government has tied your hands to an extent on that matter, but there is no reason to give them more money than is necessary. I agree that the budget is a reflection of our priorities and I prefer to see more money go

tards things like community investment budget and less money go towards things like police. Thank you, I yield the balance of my time. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: Seneca Savoy.

[10:20:23 AM]

>> Hi, I'm a resident of district 4. And calling in in support of the community reinvestment budget. I think it's a reflection of what are now long-standing values in Austin. Over the last few years this council has done work that has been exemplary in terms of allocating budget to save lives. Roughly five times as many people died of covid in tarrant county than in Travis county, right? It's not a coincidence. There are more at-risk people in Travis county, lower income, more likely to have diabetes, older as a general rule. And yet somehow we had a fifth the number of delegates. Literally thousands of lives. What did that was policy allocation this council made towards public health. And those investments have to continue if we want to continue saving lives.

[10:21:23 AM]

Put in context, a little over a thousand people in the same period of time where we had, you know, news being made for, you know, roughly 70 homicides, a thousand people died of covid in Austin, right? Many times over [inaudible] Died of traffic accidents in Austin. And so what can save those people's lives? What can save those lives are the isolation centers we set up, investments in public health and sorely needed investments in ems. Right now the biggest risk to your life if you live in Austin, Texas is that when you get in a car crash or you contract monkeypox and you are an elderly person, that no one is going to get to you in time for health emergency. We're sorely understaffed in ems and that is going to cost people's lives. I've heard talk to the effect that we can't increase the ems without having the budget do the same for cops. I think that's a ruinous

[10:22:25 AM]

logic. We have the highest paid city service. It's a modest ask other public safety servants get paid in parity with those already getting paid the best, as close as we can. Because without that retention, when you get in a car wreck, and there are going to be more car wrecks because the population is increase and the amount of transportation is not going to scale up for almost a deca, people are going to die. When we think about safety, we're talking about concretely is saving people's lives. And what we have now, you know, in the form of the reinvestme budget, but fundamentally in terms of paying our ems a fair and living wage is the opportunity to save lives across the city. And that reflects work that you've already done. This reinvestment budget didn't just spring out of nowhere. It reflects the work that this council has already done and should continue to do. I believe that you will. Please amend the budget to

[10:23:26 AM]

make sure that we make the priorities. [Buzzer sounding] In public safety that will save the lives we desperately need to save. Thank you. >> Clerk: Sam Kirsh. >> Mayor Adler, alter, councilmembers, I'm a resident of district 5. Someone shot in the eye by APD over two years ago, I was happy to see the trauma recovery center was allocated the full \$1 million the advocates had asked for in the budget framework. Trauma informs mental health care and social services are so important for many victims of violence. Funding for emergency rental assistance and weather shelter are also good steps to help mitigate the past policy failures of the city, state and country where people have no other choice than to try to survive unhoused. Permanent supportive housing is the right way forward,

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but the proposed budget framework is not enough. We need more money for those programs. And calling a \$18 an hour minimum wage for city workers a living wage is just completely detached from reality. It's not a competitive wage in the city. It's roughly \$32,000 per year. The city needs its workers to function just at its bare minimum and they continue to get pushed out of the city. Why shou they care about how well they do their jocks if they can't afford to live here. Paramedics are the lowest paid and most critical for safety response and we're asking so much of them. We're asking them to respond to intense heat and cold conditions, covid-19, drug overdoses, accidents and so much more. And they deserve significant wage increases. You know, so I'm demanding the city allocate the full \$75 million asked for by well over 30ommunity organizations, and I'm

[10:25:27 AM]

confident that the city manager and city council can find the funds necessary to make the full demands of the community investment budget a reality. This is really a small drop in the total amount of money in the general fund. So this should not be controversial. This is critical for public safety and health. Thank you very much. I yield my time. >> Clerk: Frank nesh. >> Hi, my name is frank and I am a resident of district 1. I'm speaking about the budget today because I am echoing earlier statements that I've heard about we have -- we are overfunding the police. Again a reminder because the state law we will -- any dollar we put into the police we will never get back out. What you are essentially saying, if you cannot grant city employees who have been called heroes, working their butts off the past years

[10:26:27 AM]

during very difficult working conditions, that they can't get paid a living wage now, you are saying you will never give them that money because that money will always be for APD. So rather than tackling things that affect my life, things like my power going out once a month, things like -- things like emts not being able to reach people for over half an hour. Not because of any reason other than they don't have the staff or the ambulances. So what I'm asking is that you invest in your city and invest in your people and proceed with the community investment budget and meet our needs. Thank you very much for your time and attention and I hope you have a great day. >> Clerk: Aleah dannit. >> Hello, good morning. I am a resident of district

[10:27:30 AM]

4. I'm calling today as part of the grass roots coalition behind the community investment budget. While it felt significant to witness a partial implementation of the community investment budget, just a couple weeks ago, I'm calling on council to include all \$74 million in recommendations for the community investment budget, and the most minimal implementation of funding towards APD. We saw in the [inaudible] This year that APD targets and brutalizes black and brown folks and that is with \$442.8 million in budget, training and virtually infinite access to resources. If you can't get better with \$442.8 million, I don't know how you can possibly improve. These are the same communities who may be born and raised here who are being pushed out of their homes and literally into the woods for south of sight for affluent and white

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austinites. People have this their homes stolen and the little they've been able to gather costing the city tens of thousands of dollars each time. That funding could simply be reflected towards getting folks homes and resources, and despite the research proving that a housing first strategy leads to positive, long-term positive [inaudible] For both the community and the city as a whole, we've yet to see it happen on a larger scale. For decades if not centuries the most marginalized in the country and city have had to fend for themselves and keep the lights on and clothes on their backs. There's so much potential for Austin to be the city that it claims to be. There are a lot of folks who have moved here. We've heard that, you know, keep Austin weird and keeping Austin unique, but you can't do that when the very people who make up the city who bring the culture

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and the flavor and provide necessary services like ems workers, when they cannot afford to stay in the city, when the can 23409 afford to live and afford to feed themselves, folks are being pushed out. And I support full funding for the community investment budget because it means a material difference for

the lives of so many people in Austin who haven't had the opportunity to flourish because it has been stolen from them. So please, please, city council, a human to another human, people need a living wage, people need places to stay, people need to be able to feed themselves and their families. Everyone who is sitting at the city council wants that for themselves and why not ensure that your constituents, the people who voted for you who are in this city who need it, who have suffered throughout the covid-19 pandemic through

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the new waves that are coming, monkeypox and all of this have what they need in order to survive and thrive and make this city what it claims to be and what it truly can be at its absolute best. Thank you so much for your time and take care. >> Clerk: Elana Bose. >> Good morning. Mayor Adler and our members of city council, my name is Elana and I am a member of district 5. And I am also in support of the community investment budget. And speaking to prioritize funding the police in Austin. Personally I would like to thank you for funding, fully funding the important and necessary work that's being done at a trauma recovery center, but I also wanted to

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Speak to the -- the necessaryness funding weather shelters. We are living in unprecedented times meet logically speaking. I believe it cannot act as sanctuary in this time where we are facing a heat wave often unseen by even Texans, while we've been at regular risk of losing power, that we can continue to overwhelmingly fund something that is taking away resources from the community at large. It's simply impossible to exist under the circumstances that have been presented to us recently without the resources provided by this budget. And to me and obviously many others on this call, fully

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funding this proposed budget is the very least that could be done and it seems like it would make sense given recent things that have been passed and moved towards making our city a sanctuary for people who live in Austin, but also people who live in Texas as a whole. And leading the movement forward towards a new way of thinking about how to protect our people. I would like to see us provide those resources to those who are at risk and continuing to fund -- suggest that funding the police astronomically over investing in the lives and safety of our citizens is going to continue to injure our population. Thank you. I yield the rest of my time. >> Clerk: Ryan Pollack. >> Hi, thank you, council

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and mayor. This is Ryan Pollack, a member of ibw local 520 and the Austin central labor council. Particularly speaking on behalf of my brothers and sisters who work for the city of Austin and are ems services. I implore you to increase funding in our city departments for ems. I've been a long-time resident of the city, 15 years now. I would really prefer to be able to get emergency services when I need them or if my neighbors need them rather than us investing in a surveillance system that is proven not to work and will also be used to likely hunt down, you know, people who are trying to, you know, get an abortion as has been outlawed in the state now, even though we've decriminalized it here in Austin. Everybody here knows the implications of such a

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system. The last thing we want here is increased surveillance and less privacy. Nobody in Austin wants that. Also increasing funding for the police when we already know the state has barred us from ever decreasing any funding that they do get to invest so much money in public relations office is just ludicrous. Nobody wants this. If they want to better their public relations, they could try being helpful but we all know they are not going to do that. This is a terrible investment of our money, of our condominiums that could be better -- funds that could be used to increase quality of life and health and safety. I implore you to consider that and to be able to increase funding for ems, for the city, because we're in dire need and we are losing employees. And for basic city services, I would rather not live in a police state. I want to live in a place

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that is enjoyable and that is thriving where I can get basic services and where we can all have nice things. Thank you very much. I yield my time. >> Clerk: Cliff Kaplan. >> Hi, my name is cliff Kaplan. I've been a resident in district 5 for about seven years. I'm also calling in support of the community investment budget. I think the council has taken a good step in the right direction but needs to do a lot more. You know, the future of the city really depends on keeping it a good place to live for people of all income levels and all races. And that's not going to happen without meaningful investments in the resources and services that people in this city need.

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And a meaningful investment is really well outlined in the community investment budget and I think that the city government owes a debt of gratitude to all the work that the coalition behind the budget has put in to come to that [inaudible]. So thank you for your time and I hope that this will stretch a lot further

and invest just the 6% of the overall budget that is proposed in the community investment budget. Thank you. >> Clerk: Beverly laser. >> Yes, hi. My name is Beverly laser and I represent district 8 and the Austin justice coalition. I would just like to begin by saying that we are overpaying APD and we need to minimize their budget. Where Austin makes significant inroads in funding service that

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supports all community members and create greater equity in our city. We believe with your help, yes, we can. Thanks to a unified effort of many organizing and advocacy groups in the city, the 2023 city of Austin draft proposal budget released recently is a good beginning that means the community, community's needs by including a number of investments in basic health and quality of life areas, including rental assistance, inclement weather shelter and mobility many of which are first-time allocations. However, the proposed budget allocations fell far short of the true scale of the community's core needs in many of these key areas. The funding needs to be made much higher to address the scale of our city's steep

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challenges. If we are to mitigate spending to increase wages for the lowest paid workers, fully funding EMS and our paramedics, help people at risk of eviction, address gun violence and the rising opioid death crisis, we need to rebalance our budget in favor of all our communities. I implore you to pass a budget that keeps struggling families in their home as rents skyrocket and lift wages for our lowest paid workers. Thank you. I field my time. -- Yield my time. >> Clerk: Mig began day. -- Megan day. >> Hi, this is Megan day. I'm a resident of district 10 and I'm also calling in today to support the community investment budget. As many of my fellow Austinites have mentioned, this budget really provides a significant amount of services that our community desperately needs. And would not go towards

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funding things like that actually harm our community. For instance, this budget has emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention. As we've all seen rents skyrocketing in our city and it especially hurts Black and brown individuals in our city. Housing is the foundation for family security and safety and we've seen a major uptick in unhoused neighbors in our city. So we really do need this protection. Related to that crisis, we do need inclement weather sheltering. Our city has seen severe weather events this past couple weeks have been skyrocketing temperatures and we've had severe freezes. This really harms especially our unhoused people and neighbors in our community. In addition, this budget provides services for immigrants. I am a law student at the University of Texas, specializing in immigration

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law. And since immigration is often considered civil, people don't always get the representation that they desperately need which denies fellow austinites due process rights they would not otherwise have. This budget provides immigrant legal services to low-income immigrants in our city so people can have representation when seeking deportation protections. This budget also provides abortion support. I'm a woman of reproductive age and I now have fewer rights than my sister in new York. I have fewer rights than my mother had at my age. I have fewer rights than my grandmother had at my age and I feel this budget does not go far enough to giving me those rights back but at least does something to alleviate this terrible travesty that women and people who are able to give birth are facing today. These funds will help people with travel costs,

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reimbursements, and other things that we desperately need in order to get the health care that we deserve. In addition, this -- I implore us not to provide for funding towards the surveillance state as I think some fellow austinites have mentioned on this call. That increasing surveillance budgets would severely harm those of us who are of reproductive age and are seeking health care. So I implore you all to consider this community investment budget. It has had significant support from various coalitions across the city and has been supported by many people in our city. So thank you and I appreciate your time. [Buzzer sounding] >> Clerk: Jason Fritch. >> Good morning. My name is Jason. I'm a resident of district

[10:42:49 AM]

7. I'm a native Texan and have been a resident of Austin for almost a decade now. It's no secret that our city is growing. It's also no secret the cost of living has gone up as well. As Texans and as austinites, we should really strive to look out for each other. The city has shown that we're capable of doing that by allocating \$1 million for the creation of trauma recovery center. I'm asking that we continue to look out for austinites by allocating the full \$75 million asked for by more than 30 community advocacy groups. When you think of the phrase looking out for each other, first responders may come to mind. Our city's EMS epitomizes looking out for other. We've got vacant EMS positions that need to be filled. By increasing EMS wages, we'll be taking care of our EMS folks and hopefully

[10:43:51 AM]

filling those vacancies. With the cost of living increases, we should also look out for our city employees. We can do so by increasing the minimum wage to 22 an hour. I have a friend who works for the city. He brings home almost \$23 an hour and is paid every two weeks which is like two times a month. Almost all of one of those checks is spent on renting. A one bedroom apartment he pretty much depends on overtime to get by. If this is my friend's life almost 23 an hour, imagine those that are paid less. We need to bump up the minimum wage for city employees to \$22 an hour and fully fund the community investment budget. Thank you for your time. >> Clerk: Jao Powell Connally. >> Hello. Good morning, councilmembers. I am the organizing director

[10:44:52 AM]

at the Austin justice coalition, but also calling you today in my capacity as co-chair for the leadership council of the austin-travis county continuum of care. I would like to draw your attention to a letter that we sent you on the 14th of July which in many ways reiterated concerns and requests that we raised in a letter sent to you in February. If you have not read this letter, please search your inboxes for it. I won't be able to read the entire letter, but it is about the urgent need for inclement weather shelter and I will read key points. This year's budget cycle offers a key opportunity to take action and address a number of the systemic gaps that we have. The need for improved response operations to inclement weather has led to create a working group. As frontline volunteers outreach and health care

[10:45:53 AM]

workers, community organizers experience stakeholder groups representing a wide Austin constituency, we urge you to take the following steps with intention and foresight to save lives this coming winter. And this also applies to extreme heat in the summer. One, ensure truly adequate funding for inclement weather sheltering. In line with the investment in the community investment budget, we urge you to commit no less than \$3 million towards shelter. This must be treated as budget priority to event further unnecessary deaths. Move towards a calendar based response to cold weather shelter. Increase the shelter access and available shelters. Create paid positions for staff to adequately operate, coordinate and manage sheltering sites. Provide culturally competency training performed by lived expertise for all staff on crisis response, de-escalation and anti-racism, ADA compliance and harm reduction best practices.

[10:46:54 AM]

Create a plan that coordinates with community organizations and grass roots outreach efforts. Adequately provide shelter sites with meals, drinking water, hygiene, harm reduction and first aid supplies. I won't read the rest of this letter, but will note during the winter months of 2021 and 22 caring

for thousands of unsheltered austinites felt large I on volunteers who opened their cars, homes and bank accounts in order to cover for the gaps in a system not awed literally designed or funded to withstand lite change. We are in support and solidarity with all the groups supporting the community investment budget. We support the full ask for the \$74 million, and we also request that you take this letter seriously and ask the important questions that need to be asked about the proposed current funding in the proposed baseline

[10:47:54 AM]

budget. [Buzzer sounding] The funding does not go far enough. It does not meet the requests in the act and there is a serious lack of clarity about what is being proposed. Right now it says for the extension of two contracts for cold weather shelter. We're not sure who those contracts will go to and we're not sure any of what is being proposed is in alignment -- >> Clerk: Thank you, speaker. Your time has expired. Moving on to in-person speakers. First is Alexander Fulton, on deck chas Moore. >> Council and members, I really appreciate you letting me talk to you all real quick. I'm in district 7. Representative pool, I'm in

[10:48:55 AM]

your district. I've tried to call you countless times in your office. Your phone is continuously going to voice mail or gets me to a machine that directs me back to people in the city. I have questions about the budget, I have questions about property taxes. People in this community have been here for decades, years. They are the original austinites. They are being chased out of the city because of property taxes. There's nothing that I've read in this budget that shows me that y'all are dedicated to actually saving the city, the culture and the advancement of people not based on color, creed, ideology, but you are chasing them out of the city. They are going to the suburbs. And in turn losing that revenue in the city. I askhat y'all look deeply into the property tax and

[10:49:57 AM]

find ways to provide additional relief. My fiance and I have lived in our home in Austin, our firs house. We're very excited to be here in this community. But every year now we cringe when we see our property tax bill. And I'm not the only one that thinks that. Ditionally, we get the appraisal for our home which also needs to be fixed going into the property tax in the whole, and the appraisers are putting different elements into our home that quite frankly do not exist. According to the city appraiser, I have a fireplace in my home. I wish I did when the power went out in 2020. That would have been great. 2021. I apologize. But I do ask that you all seriously look into this. And if you do want to expand the property tax parameters, putt to a vote to the people. What the state allows you to do.

[10:50:57 AM]

And I feel that every time the new budget rolls out in the city, what we're doing is we're putting it just under the cap, just enough to slide under the rug and hope that the people don't identify and realize. So I ask you for the 2023 and 23, raise it above 3.5, 3.7% and put it to a vote to the people. Let's see what the people of Austin actually what they think and if it passes, so be it, put it in place. But I do implore you all to take that very seriously because you are chasing people that made this city so great and so awesome and a reason people of my age have traveled across the country to live here to move out of the city and go to different areas. And I know you all know this, but when you lose residents of the city. [Buzzer sounding] You lose taxpayer dollars. I appreciate your time. Thank you so much.

[10:51:58 AM]

>> >> Mayor Adler: Sir, I really appreciate you coming down. One of the unique features of the budget proposed by the city manager here is that in this year's proposal, the actual amount of property taxes to be paid by the average homeowner in the city goes down by almost \$100. So please take a look at that. >> Yes, sir, and I appreciate that and I did look into that and it makes sense. I'm seeing you are making a conscious effort to do that. I just would -- I would like to in a perfect world go to a vote to the people. And let us have our voice be heard. I have a problem with taxation and not getting what we the people actually need out of this city. But I do appreciate that, Mr. Mayor, so thank you so much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Pool: Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Can you repeat

[10:52:59 AM]

your name? >> Alexander Fulton. >> Pool: Thanks. My staff will be in touch with you. I'm pretty sure we haven't heard your messages. >> I can't lead a message. It loops you back when you hit other options to talk, it loops you back into the fold and times you out. So I can't actually leave you a message. >> Pool: Some of that, sir is because of pandemic and not being in the office. At any rate you are here today and my team will get in touch with you. I want to fill you in on how the appraisals are done on your home. It is not a function of this body or the city of Austin, it's an independent board. But if there are inconsistencies with how your home is being described, we can hook you up with the appraisal district to you can get those features corrected. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Pool: And we'll try to give you a hand, Mr. Fulton. >> Yes, ma'am, I look forward to talking to you.

[10:53:59 AM]

>> Pool: If you want to send us an email, all of us are first name dot last name at Austin, Texas. Email is a great way to be in touch with all of us because of the difficulties with the phone systems and so forth. >> I appreciate that. >> Pool: Thank you so much. >> Yesma'am. >> Clerk: Chas Moore. On deck Cobb Scott. Kathie Mitchell. >> I was waiting for chas Moore. >> Mayor Adler: We don't see him yet so go ahead. >> My name is Scott Cobb. I work as a lifeguard. I just wanted to let you all know, I don't know if you actually examined the budget closely, but if it's passed

[10:55:00 AM]

as it is written now, lifeguards next summer will actually earn less money than we earned this summer. This summer the starting pay was \$16 an hour. Plus we got bonuses that amounted to for the most lifeguards \$1,000 for ones with enhanced certifications, an extra 250. So it was 16 plus 1,000. You get that 1,000 if you work over ten weeks, which comes out to \$2.50 extra over that ten weeks, June 6th to August 14th. So starting lifeguard this summer made 16 plus 2.50, 18.50. Next summer if the living wage is 18 they get a cut of 50 cents. That's not going to help recruit all the lifeguards that we need to open all the pools. Right now 39% of the pools remain closed. July 4th, 49% of the pools were closed.

[10:56:00 AM]

And so I urge you to raise the living wage higher than \$18. And if you don't raise it to 22, which it should, again you also need to reinstate the bonuses that were in effect this year, the 500 for starting June 6th, 500 at the end of the summer, 250 for open water lifeguards and other enhanced certifications. Otherwise we face a pay cut. And I don't think the purpose of raising the minimum wage to 18 is to have lifeguards get less money next summer than they do this summer. So also, in the budget there is four positions budgeted for full-time lifeguards. That needs to be raised significantly. You actually need between 20 and 30. The one reason why Barton springs was closed for Mondays and Wednesdays for two months is because while we had 26 winter lifeguards on staff, most of them were

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in school or having reduced availability. Only about five to eight had full availability. And when you don't have five to eight people, you cannot operate Barton springs and it had to close for two months on Mondays and Wednesdays. So that needs to be raised from four up, 20 to 30 ideal, but definitely needs to be more than four. And I encourage you to also raise the living wage or reinstate the bonuses for next year. Also, I think you should reinstate the covid emergency relief. My father right now has covid. Almost everyone here in this room is wearing a mask. And I also encourage you not to take away the health insurance of those people whose hours were reduced. [Buzzer sounding] Because of the closure of the pools and covid. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: Kathie Mitchell.

[10:58:03 AM]

On deck Sara Childs. >> Tovo: I just wanted to thank the speaker for sharing that detail about how the proposal could impact lifeguard wages based on this year's and just ask the city manager if you would confirm -- if you would confirm those numbers. >> We will do that. Thank >> Tovo: And while Kathie is setting up perhaps we could treat that as a budget question and put it in the budget q&a so it's part of that portal. >> Hi, I'm -- oh, -- sorry, wrong place. Okay, hi I'm Kathie Mitchell. You all have heard a lot about

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the community investment budget, so I'm going to keep my comments very brief and just make sure that you have a copy of it. Um, we believe that the first steps taken by the city manager based on budget were excellent. We are very happy to see a move to, you know, fund emergency rental assistance in this very urgent time. We are happy to see a number of the other investments. We're still parsing how the park stuff sort of matches up with the coalition priorities, but all in all it was a good first step. What I want to add to that is that the groups that got together included housers and parks and, you know, social services, and all the different folks in our community with, you know, an interest in investment in the community. And across the board, what we

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had to do was discipline ourselves to take what we saw as the real need. So in the case of emergency rental assistance, experts in housing and populations said, you know, we need a considerable investment this year, because of rising rents and because of the wave of evictions. After considerable discussion, we got that number down to 12 million. And that was intentionally put forward as a number that is both meaningful and doable. , We're very happy to see the \$5 million put into that from the city manager's baseline budget, but we urge you to consider the \$12 million to be a floor. That is how we arrived at it, and after considerable work, how we kind of came as a coalition together to agree that that would be meaningful enough and would help enough people that if we did that, it would be

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significant. And so we ask you to make these significant investments to fully fund this proposal. I will also say that it isn't as hard -- we believe that it's not as hard as it looks. The money to fully fund ems'

ask and our proposal reflects ems' full request for increases -- for wage increases. The money to do that, of course, is in the set aside. Nobody knows how much is set aside for the public safety contracts, but I have no doubt, given that ems is the lowest paid and smallest of the agencies that there is money in that bucket to fully fund their ask. And we really hope that you do that. If you kind of set that aside, then the remaining money after the city manager's initial investment is really only about \$32 million.

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[Buzzer] In terms of additional funds. So we hope that you will search deeply and hard and identify that money. Thank you. >> Sarah Childs. On deck, Jody Chung. >> Good morning, I hope that you're all do well. My name is Sarah Childs and I have been a resident of district 5 for past two years. My entire life I have lived in the Austin area and I'm here to advocate for more rental assistance and also I'm here to congratulate the million dollars funded to the trauma recovery center. Personally I know many people who have been affected by violence in their life and trauma is a recurring thing. People who face trauma as adolescents go on to be revictimized typically. So having that trauma recovery center is a great place to provide resources to the community, to make sure that they do not go through anymore

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pain. This not only will this help them personally but it will help them throughout their lives and to be someone who can contribute to society and who will not have to suffer with their trauma. Another thing that I'd like to bring up is the \$5 million towards rental assistance. Rent and utilities have been a struggle in my family. It is unfortunate to say, but in the next couple of years I do not think that my family will be able to sustain living in the city of Austin. My sister, unfortunately, had to move out of her apartment when storm Uri hit because it caused black mold and also it -- they would not fix her apartment, and she had to relocate, which was \$200 extra in rent. And then on top of that, this past month, her apartments told her that her rent would be increased by \$400. And she just had a kid about

[11:04:11 AM]

three months ago, and although she did anticipate rental increase, she was not able to put this into her budget. I know that y'all care about your communities, Y wouldn't be here if you didn't, and so I urge you to please seek out more funding for rental assistance. I think that what y'all are doing is great and I think that it is great that y'all care and not only should we put more money towards rental assistance but also towards climate change resiliency. As I said my sister's apartment was devastated after storm Uri hit and as we know with climate change that these adverse weather events will continue to happen. I think we have seen it with the increasing heat -- or the increasing cold --, and so the \$1.2 million to

support two additional shelter operations is great. I hope that we will be able to provide another shelter. I also believe that the \$2.2

[11:05:12 AM]

million to provide eight new positions towards distribution facilities to improve city responses to major catastrophic events will be great, because as we heard before, when storm Uri hit the majority of the people were volunteers. And so we need more of a city response to help people. [Buzzer] Thank you all for your time. I appreciate it. >> Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> It is important to thank Sarah for her service. Sarah is a summer intern with our office this summer and is part of the city's youth summer program where they place interns throughout offices, in departments. And so I just really want to thank Sarah for testifying and for all of the help and support that she's provided our office this summer. And wishing her all the best. She's an incoming senior at Crockett high school and will serve as student body president. Thank you, Sarah.

[11:06:13 AM]

>> I'm here because I care about the health and safety of Austin's roller derby community. My name is Jody Chung and I'm a member of Austin roller derby. We have seven leagues with 350 skaters from 7 years old to in their mid 50s. And hundreds of volunteers, officials and fans. We are so fortunate that parks and rec department maintains a public roller derby track with us. With this record-breaking heat wave though, we're practicing in 105° weather and it's become a public safety issue. I'm fearful that with climate change, wther will be a recurring concern year round, including the winter months. With one league ranked 7th and the other ranked 16th in the world, if we canceled practices for a couple of months during the season, competitive tournaments would become dangerous for our skaters. I came here because I wanted to make you aware of this public safety issue. Our track is in district 4.

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It is 10-by-10 square feet -- or 10-by-10 feet. It is concrete and in full sun. I'm asking the city to apply capital dollars to build a shaded structure for the outdoor track. We've had skaters pass out, suffer from HT exhaustion. I myself have vomited at more practices than I can count during this heat wave. Our long-term goal is an indoor space as climate change makes even shaded outdoor practice dangerous. The pandemic decimated roller derby. We are trying to rebuild the sport that was born right here in Austin, Texas. And resume its status as a powerhouse in the world. Thank you. >> Ma'am, real quick -- y'all practice at the park -- >> We do, we're off of 51st

[11:08:16 AM]

street. >> Yeah, I'm very familiar with the -- well, the park and that track. And let's see what we can do about shade structure, honestly, I mean, at this point for our city parks to be usable from April to September, you know, you need shade structures at the playgrounds and at the different events. I know that at Bartholemew park the neighborhood D fundraising to put up the trade structures that are above the playgrounds there. But -- I appreciate the information and the testimony and let's see what we can do. >> I promise that we're doing everything that we can to fundraise on our own, but it would be really helpful if the city could help. It's kind of hard to watch, like, 7 year Olds skate in the heat. >> Thank you very much. >> Thank U. >> Andrew hornaman. On deck, Tina Myers.

[11:09:27 AM]

>> Hi, I'm Andrew hornaman. Tina is not -- so, mayor Adler, and esteemed member, council, this is my first time. My name is Andrew hornaman and I live in district 4. And I will be frank, I mostly dread talking with anyone who works for the city because I find that 70%, 80% of the time that people are uptight and rude. And then I learned that, like, most of the people here in the city, like, they don't make enough money to even to afford to LIV here. So if I put myself in their shoes, I kind of would be rude too. It is hard to do your job to the best of your ability when you have to, like, drive outside to even work for the city. And it's -- and on top of that, like -- like the prices are higher here and it's like if you have to -- if you have to drive and then pay for your own food

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and then -- and then go back to your own home, like, I would only work enough not to get fired. And this shows when you go -- like, this shows any government office, like go to the DMV, and there's nobody happy there. And so what I'm asking -- and I'm so glad that I'm not, like, don't even need an ems worker. So what I'm asking is that the city workers get paid the minimum of \$22 an hour so that there would be, like, a positive impact. So you can just feel it here. And I'm also asking that the city council include the \$75 million in the community investment budget. And thank you for your time. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Tina Myers.

[11:11:31 AM]

That concludes our speakers. >> Mayor Adler: Thanyou. Is there anyone here who thinks they signed up and was not called? That being the case, then we worked our way through our agenda here for today. And the next time THA we get together will be tomorrow for our regular city council meeting. So here at

11:11, this meeting is adjourned. We appreciate everyone who participated both by phone and here directly. See you all tomorrow.

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